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The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

10 August 1989

MEMORANDUM

This memorandum sets forth procedures for preparing Executive Briefs.

WHAT ARE EXECUTIVE BRIEFS?

Briefs are designed to provide policymakers with coordinated, policy-relevant analysis on short notice. They are not a substitute for Estimates. But they are a means of producing estimative intelligence more rapidly and in more abbreviated form than is possible with Estimates. Accordingly, like Estimates, Briefs should avoid lengthy descriptions of current intelligence in favor of predictive, judgmental assertions about future uncertainties.

GENERATING A BRIEF:

Briefs are generated the same way as Estimates: namely, any appropriate senior policy official can request a Brief on a specific subject, or the NIO can originate one if he believes developments in a particular geographic or issue area have created a need for a Brief. In either case, the topic should be approved by Chairman or Vice Chairman, NIC.

PRESENTATION AND PRODUCTION:

Brevity is essential. Three pages is long enough for most Executive Briefs; few should exceed four. Speed is also essential. Most Briefs should be completed in two or three days; few should require longer than a week.

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SUBJECT: Executive Briefs

The NIC Production Officer is the focal point for ensuring that NIC Executive Briefs are produced in a uniform style, to the extent feasible. Attached are samples of recent Executive Briefs in the style we have adopted for use until the NIC gets up to speed with the new workstations and printers and learns to use more sophisticated desktop publishing software and procedures. To keep abreast of possible refinements of the standard style, please check with the Production Officer before starting the process.

In the current format, developed through trial and error and refined in the Analytic Group, Briefs have two sections: the first page and the body, consisting of all succeeding pages. (No cover memorandum is necessary; disseminate with a buck slip.)

- The first page is styled on NIC letterhead with NIC number and date. The words EXECUTIVE BRIEF (underlined) centered and THE TITLE are capitalized, in bold face, and centered. They are followed by four or five short bullets (each of four lines or less) summarizing the key findings. A note at the bottom of the page indicates:
 - Which NIO produced the Brief,
 - How the findings were generated,
 - With whom and how the Brief was coordinated,
 - Who the drafter was.
- The body is printed in two-column pages with headings and key points in bold face. The key points are further highlighted through isolation from the main text. THE TITLE is repeated at the beginning of the body. Bullet (but not sub-bullet) paragraphs may be used.

Currently, most Briefs are produced using Microsoft Word (version 4.0 or 5.0) and printed, via the VM system, on a Xerox 2700 printer, using its Kosmos fonts. Similar though not identical versions can be produced for printing on the new Hewlet Packard laser printers or NIO/SP's IBM laser printer.

COORDINATION:

Coordination may be achieved at a Community meeting or by telephone. The key point is that participating analysts must be satisfied that their viewpoints are fully represented. If consensus cannot be achieved, express dissent clearly in the text. Avoid footnotes. They are more suitable in Estimates than in Briefs. When a draft is substantially altered during the coordination process, participating analysts should be given

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an opportunity to comment on the final draft prior to issue. Ultimately, the degree of formal coordination required is subject to the collective judgment of the NIO and his colleagues from participating agencies.

APPROVAL:

Chairman or Vice Chairman must approve the final product before distribution.

DISTRIBUTION:

Each NIO office should develop a distribution list tailored to the Executive Brief. Standard distribution lists for Estimates in most cases are too broad for this purpose. To keep the package small, distribution lists should not be attached to the Briefs; they are (with some exceptions) for NIC office use only. Our target audience for Briefs generally ranges from the Office Director through the Under Secretary level, including comparable officials in the services and the National Security Council.


David D. Gries

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